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From: Catherine Caufield, Environmental Action Committee of West Marin
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Sent: Wednesday, February 16, 2005 1:59 PM
To: MLPAComments@resources.ca.gov
Subject: MLPAComments: Comment on Central California Coast Study Region

MLPA Blue Ribbon Taskforce
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The Environmental Action Committee of West Marin wish to comment on the MLPA Initiative Study Region Options for the Central California coast (Point Arena to Point Conception). We believe it critical that the study area contain the Marin County coastline, where the Point Reyes Peninsula and its associated Farallones Islands and Cordell Bank, form by far the most highly productive marine area on the Central California coast, and amongst the most highly productive areas in the world. Consequently the northern boundary of the MLPA Study area should be either Bodega Head, Point Arena or some point between in order to capture this entire Cordell Bank/Point Reyes productive area yet form a northern boundary that makes sense relative to user patterns and jurisdictional boundaries of potential partners such as the Point Reyes National Seashore, Golden Gate National Recreation Area and the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary, whose northern boundary currently ends at Bodega Head but is proposed to be extended to north toward Point Arena.

The MLPA Study area's southern boundary should establish a study area of generous proportions in order to provide regulators with a side variety of habitat types and user patterns so that the most advantageous can be selected and the most difficult avoided. A southern boundary set at Pigeon Point or northward would not accomplish this end, so we suggest southern boundaries of the MLPA Study area in order of preference (with reason why noted in parentheses) as follows: Point Sur (a biophysical boundary that includes Monterey Bay), Point Conception (a boundary that provides the largest variety of habitat and user patterns), Cambria (next largest variety, Monterey Bay NMS southern boundary) or Ano Nuevo (biophysical boundary, GFNMS southern management boundary).

We do not support prioritizing MLPA Study areas proposed from the Golden Gate south that exclude this highly productive northern area around Cordell Bank/Point Reyes. It would of course be much easier to protect southern marine areas with low productivity and low user impact such as the coast from Point Sur south, however, that would defeat the entire purpose of the MLPA legislation, which is to protect the highly productive nursery areas that are the long-term sustainers of our fishing industry.

Sincererly,

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Protecting West Marin since 1971